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Nat J. Colletta
Amy Jo Reinhold

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Foreword

Review of Early Childhood Development Policy and Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa is the second in a series of technical papers produced by the Africa Region's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Initiative.

This report complements a previous paper, *The Condition of Young Children in Sub-Saharan Africa*, which outlined the shape and scale of children's survival needs health, nutrition, and early education. The earlier report documented how children in Africa face greater challenges to healthy development than any other region in the world and emphasized that timely intervention is crucial, particularly in the much neglected period from birth to primary school entry.

The present report explores ways of meeting these developmental challenges. It reviews current programs and policies across a set of country experiences from the mobile Mobile War Trauma Team in Angola, to Mauritius' Legal Framework for multi-sectoral policy and action for ECD. The analysis of eleven case studies reveals the policy and institutional conditions necessary for sustained impact of ECD efforts.

Also in preparation are in-depth country studies of ECD models in South Africa, Kenya and Mauritius. These studies will enhance our knowledge of innovative practice and quality improvements being tested in the region. The technical papers and lessons drawn from the country studies will be synthesized into a single document which proposes a regional strategy for continued support to ECD in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The ECD Initiative combines knowledge generation and dissemination with two additional components of World Bank support: a) funding for innovative prototype ECD programs, such as those supported in Kenya and Uganda by the Bank's Africa Technical Human Development Department; and b) capacity-building for African policy makers and ECD practitioners. In the capacity building arena, an African ECD Network (ECDNA) comprising practitioners and policy makers from over twenty countries has been formed and is now recognized as a Working Group of the Association for the Development of African Education.

The initiative is working with the ECDNA to host an African Regional ECD Workshop for practitioners, policy makers, researchers and donors. This forum will allow participants to build on existing best practice, strengthen capacity and create policy for promoting multi-sectoral, early childhood development programs. Follow-up training activities will strengthen regional and in-country capacity for program and policy development and research for the integration of health, nutrition, early education and community support services in maternal and early childhood development.

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